

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, before the title, delete from “Utility Patent Application” to and including “P. Jeff Martin, Esq.”

Page 1, delete the present title in its entirety and replace with new title below:

--“ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE SUPPORT BRACKET”--

Page 1, delete the heading “Related Applications” and its accompanying paragraph and replace with the following heading and paragraph:

--CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of United States Patent Application Serial No. 10/166,961, filed June 11, 2002, which issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,708,799B1 on March 23, 2004, both of which are herein incorporated by reference in their entirety.--

Page 1, under the heading BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION and 1. Field of the Invention, delete the present paragraph and replace with the following paragraph:

--The present invention relates generally to removable devices or accessories for all-terrain vehicles and, more particularly, to an all-terrain vehicle support bracket.--

Page 2, following the first full paragraph and at line 12, insert the following paragraph:

--ATVs are also in wide use in both residential and commercial farming, gardening and similar applications. However, these activities typically include the use of ancillary equipment, which must be dragged or otherwise transported to the various remote
{W0146815.1}

locations in these settings. Therefore, there remains a need for a structure for transporting equipment, tools, supplies and other objects to these remote locations using the ATV.--

Page 2, beginning at line 12, delete in its entirety, the present paragraph beginning with “Accordingly” and ending with “need”.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 2, line 18 through page 4, line 5, ending with “and efficient”, with the following paragraphs:

--U.S. Patent No. **5,297,844** issued in the name of *Haustein* discloses a cab and hunting stand being attachable to and easily removable from the front and rear racks of an ATV.

U.S. Patent No. **4,696,374** issued in the name of *Hale* discloses a portable hunting stand adapted to be retrofitted to a three wheeled motorcycle, ATV or the like.

U.S. Patent No. **615,721** issued in the name of *Lane* discloses a basket which has a lower portion comprising a section of frame which is provided with a protective covering being spark preventative.

U.S. Patent No. **5,236,062** in the name of *Laney* describes a support rack adapted for mounting to an all-terrain vehicle framework.

U.S. Patent No. **5,863,173** issued in the name of *Bremner* describes a vehicular deck attachment and assembly.

U.S. Patent No. **6,012,545** issued in the name of *Faleide* discloses a foldable vehicle ladder system for allowing a user to easily view and access the interior portion of a truck box and other equipment.

U.S. Patent No. **5,642,844** issued in the name of *Rector* describes a tree stand carrier for an ATV.

U.S. Patent No. **6,290,023 B1** issued in the name of *Martin* discloses a system and apparatus for converting a trailer to an observation stand.

U.S. Patent No. **5,881,839** issued in the name of *Stanley* discloses a hunter's stand for securement to the bed of a pick-up truck.

U.S. Patent No. **6,345,691 B1** issued in the name of *Ruiz* describes a ladder latch system for securing telescoping ladders in the retracted position.

U.S. Patent No. **6,086,031** issued in the name of *Renfro* describes a gun and beverage support system for supporting a weapon and a beverage while the hunter is sitting or standing within a tree stand.

U.S. Patent No. **5,651,484** issued in the name of *Fugman* describes a ladder support accessory for a truck rack, wherein the assembly includes various parts that must be permanently attached or welded to the truck rack.

Consequently, a need has been felt for providing a removably attachable device for an ATV which supports various objects, such as a traditional aluminum ladder, in a manner which is quick, easy, and efficient.--

Following the heading SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION, delete all paragraphs from page 4, line 8 through page 5, line 20 and replace with the following new paragraphs:

-- It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide an all-terrain vehicle support bracket for use in supporting various objects adjacent an all-terrain vehicle. It is a further object of the present invention to provide an all-terrain vehicle support bracket that allows the all-terrain vehicle to transport an object, such as a ladder, to various remote locations. It is a still further object of the present invention to provide an all-terrain vehicle support bracket that is easily and removably attached to a portion of the all-terrain vehicle. It is yet another object of the present invention to provide an all-terrain vehicle support bracket for use in connection with a standard all-terrain vehicle and for supporting a traditional aluminum ladder.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a support bracket designed to be removably attached to both a front and rear ATV horizontal frame member as are associated with a traditional ATV. It is another object of the present invention to provide a support bracket fabricated of cold rolled, hollow steel tubing. It is another object of the present invention to provide a main leg member with a curved, lower end which forms a threaded cusp. It is another object of the present invention to provide a V-shaped extension member with a lower end defining complementary threads for threadedly engaging the threaded cusp. It is another object of the present invention to provide a V-shaped extension

{W0146815.1}

member which is available in a plurality of sizes having various lengths. It is another object of the present invention to provide an upper arm member which extends perpendicularly from the main leg member and bifurcates into two laterally opposed retainment arms. It is another object of the present invention to provide retainment arms which are mechanically impinged against cross members of the front and rear ATV horizontal frame members. It is another object of the present invention to provide a support bracket designed so as to accommodate at least two aluminum ladders. It is still another object of the present invention to provide a support bracket designed and configured so as to rest in an angular plane which allows for total ATV tire clearance when tires are facing forward as well as when turned.

Accordingly, the present invention is directed to an all-terrain vehicle support bracket. The support bracket includes at least one frame assembly that is removably attachable to a portion of an all-terrain vehicle. Further, the frame assembly includes a support surface thereon, and this support surface is sized and shaped so as to support an object that is positioned on the surface. Further, the support surface may support a variety of objects, such as a ladder, a container, a bag, tools, equipment, garden tools, lawn tools, rope, posts, fencing supplies, a gate, farm equipment, farm equipment attachments, wood, boards, building supplies, construction supplies, etc.

Briefly described according to one embodiment of the present invention, an all-terrain vehicle support bracket is provided. The support bracket includes a pair of tubular frame assemblies adapted for removable attachment to a traditional all-terrain vehicle (ATV) to serve as a support means. More specifically, the present invention is designed and configured to be removably attached to both a front and a rear ATV horizontal frame member as are associated with a traditional ATV.--

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 6, line 14 through page 7, ending at line 4, with the following new paragraphs:

--The frame assembly (or assemblies) are removably attached to a portion of the ATV. The function and method of attachment of one embodiment of the present invention to a traditional ATV is described briefly hereinbelow.

Retainment arms of the upper arm member are directed orthogonally below inner cross members of the front ATV horizontal frame member, wherein retainment arms mechanically impinge against inner cross members. The main leg member rests against a

{W0146815.1}

vertical member of the front ATV horizontal frame member. Once a desired V-shaped extension member has been selected and threadedly attached to the threaded cusp, a support surface is created for supporting the object, such as an aluminum ladder, while the main leg member serves as a firm base upon which forward sidewalls of vertical legs of an aluminum ladder can be supported, thereby securably supporting the ladder in a restrained manner for transport.--

Page 7, line 17, insert the following paragraph therefor:

--The present invention, both as to its construction and its method of operation, together with the additional objects and advantages thereof, will best be understood from the following description of exemplary embodiments when read in connection with the accompanying drawings.--

Page 7, following the heading BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS, through page 8, line 15, please replace all present paragraphs with the following new paragraphs:

--Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an all-terrain vehicle support bracket according to one preferred embodiment of the present invention shown attached to an ATV and supporting an object, in this case an aluminum ladder;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the support bracket of Fig. 1 shown attached to an ATV;

Fig. 3 is a side elevational view of the support bracket of Fig. 1 shown attached to a front ATV horizontal frame member;

Fig. 4 is a side elevational view of a frame assembly according to the present invention;

Fig. 5 is an exploded perspective view of the tubular frame assembly of Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is a partial top plan view of a rear ATV horizontal frame member according to the prior art;

Fig. 7 is a perspective view of a traditional aluminum ladder according to the prior art; and

Fig. 8 is a perspective view of the support bracket of Fig. 1 illustrating attachment to an ATV shown from a rear side thereof.--

{W0146815.1}

Page 8, beginning at line 19, following the heading DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT, through page 10, ending at line 7 with “ladders 15”, please replace all present paragraphs with the following new paragraphs:

-- For purposes of the description hereinafter, the terms “upper”, “lower”, “right”, “left”, “vertical”, “horizontal”, “top”, “bottom”, “lateral”, “longitudinal” and derivatives thereof shall relate to the invention as it is oriented in the drawing figures. However, it is to be understood that the invention may assume various alternative variations and step sequences, except where expressly specified to the contrary. It is also to be understood that the specific devices and processes illustrated in the attached drawings, and described in the following specification, are simply exemplary embodiments of the invention. Hence, specific dimensions and other physical characteristics related to the embodiments disclosed herein are not to be considered as limiting.

The present invention is directed to an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) 50 support bracket 10. The support bracket 10 includes at least one frame assembly 20 that can be removably attached or is removably attachable to a portion of an ATV 50. The frame assembly includes a support surface 33, and the support surface 33 is configured or adapted to support an object, such as a ladder 15, on this support surface 33. While discussed hereinafter in great detail with respect to a ladder 15, it is envisioned that the support bracket 10 and frame assembly 20 of the present invention could support a variety of objects for transport. For example, the object may be a ladder 15, a container, a bag, tools, equipment, garden tools, lawn tools, rope, posts, fencing supplies, a gate, farm equipment, farm equipment attachments, wood, boards, building supplies, construction supplies, etc.

In one preferred embodiment, the support bracket 10 includes a plurality of frame assemblies 20, which are removably attached to or removably attachable to a respective portion of the ATV 50. Each of these frame assemblies 20 includes the aforementioned support surface 33 for supporting an object thereon. In one preferred embodiment, the plurality of frame assemblies 20 is a pair of tubular frame assemblies 20 that are substantially identical in structure.

In one preferred and non-limiting embodiment, the frame assembly 20 includes an elongated main leg member 21, an extension member 30 positioned on a first end of the elongated main leg member 21, and an upper arm member 40 positioned on a second

{W0146815.1}

end of the elongated main leg member 21. In addition, in this embodiment, the frame assembly 20 includes a retaining member 19 that is positioned and configured to contact the ATV 50 and attach the support bracket 10 to the ATV 50. The support surface 33 includes at least a portion of the elongated main leg member 21 and/or the extension member 30, such that a surface of the main leg member 21 and/or the extension member 30 allow the object, such as the ladder 15, to be rested and supported thereon. In order to securely hold the object against the ATV 50, the extension member 30 may be a substantially V-shaped extension member 30. In addition, in this embodiment, the retaining member 19 may be a plurality of arms 41, 42 that extends substantially horizontally from the upper arm member 40, thereby providing a substantially horizontally extending retaining member 19. While two retainment arms 41, 42 are illustrated, any number of arms 41, 42 are envisioned in order to allow the support bracket 10 to be securely and removably attached to the ATV 50.

In one preferred and non-limiting embodiment, the frame assembly 20 is comprised of a pair of tubular frame assemblies 20 adapted for removable attachment to the ATV 50 to serve as an object support means. More specifically, in this embodiment, the frame assemblies 20 are designed and configured to be removably attached to both a front and rear ATV horizontal frame member 52, 60, respectively as are associated with a traditional ATV 50. For purposes of this embodiment, each of the pair of tubular frame assemblies 20 are identical, and as such, only a single frame assembly 20 is described henceforth in connection with this embodiment.

The frame assembly 20 comprises a main leg member 21 of a generally elongated configuration, preferably fabricated of cold rolled, hollow steel tubing. It is envisioned that the main leg member 21 may also be fabricated of a rigid, resilient plastic material of high strength or other similarly strong material capable of readily supporting a variety of objects, such as a traditional aluminum ladder 15; however, steel is the preferred fabrication material. The main leg member 21 includes a curved, lower end 22 forming a threaded cusp 23 which is designed so as to threadedly receive a V-shaped extension member 30. An upper end 24 of the main leg member 21 includes an eye 29 affixed in an upright manner to an uppermost extremity thereof. The eye 29 provides a receiving loop for attaching a securement strap 70, such as a bungee strap, thereto.

The V-shaped extension member 30 includes a lower end defining complementary threads 32 for threadedly engaging the threaded cusp 23. The V-shaped

{W0146815.1}

extension member 30 includes an upper end having an eye 29 affixed in an upright manner to an uppermost extremity thereof so as to facilitate removable attachment of a securement strap 70 thereto. The V-shaped extension member 30 is available in a plurality of sizes comprising various lengths, thereby allowing for the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 to accommodate a load capacity of variously-sized and shaped objects.--

Page 10, beginning at line 16, through page 12, ending at line 2 with “as when turned”, please replace all present paragraphs with the following new paragraphs:

--The frame assembly 20 further includes an upper arm member 40 extending perpendicularly from the main leg member 21 in a direction opposite to threaded cusp 23. The upper arm member 40 bifurcates into two laterally opposed retainment arms 41, 42 (acting as the retaining member 19) in a perpendicular manner so as to generally form a T-shaped member 44.

In order to best describe the function of the retaining member 19, in this embodiment the retainment arms 41, 42, and main leg member 21, a brief description of the front and rear ATV horizontal frame member 52, 60 is required. The front ATV horizontal frame member 52 defines a first portion 52a comprising a vertical member 53 connected integrally by a first outer cross member 54 and a second outer cross member 55. A first inner cross member 56 and a second inner cross member 57, functioning as brace members, integrally connect to the vertical member 53. Retainment arms 41, 42 of the upper arm member 40 are directed orthogonally below first inner cross member 56 and second inner cross member 57 of front ATV horizontal frame member 52, wherein an upper circumferential surface of retainment arms 41, 42 mechanically impinge against a lower circumferential surface of inner cross members 56, 57. A rear, external circumferential sidewall of main leg member 21, just below upper arm member 40, rests against an upper surface of vertical member 53 of the front ATV horizontal frame member 52.

Once a desired V-shaped extension member 30 has been selected and threadedly attached to the threaded cusp 23, the support surface 33 is created for supporting the object. In this embodiment, the support surface 33 contacts a lateral sidewall 16a of the vertical leg 16 of an aluminum ladder 15, while the main leg member 21 (as part of the support surface 33) serves as a firm base upon which forward sidewalls 16b of vertical legs

{W0146815.1}

16 of aluminum ladder 15 can be supported, thereby securably supporting the ladder 15 in a restrained manner for transport.

When attached for use, the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 is designed and configured so as to rest in an angular plane which allows for total tire 51 clearance when tires 51 are facing forward as well as when turned.--

Page 12, lines 8-12, please replace the present paragraph with the following new paragraph:

--The aforementioned procedure regarding temporary attachment of the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 to the front ATV horizontal frame member 52 is applied in the same manner with respect to temporary attachment of the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 to the rear ATV horizontal frame member 60.--

Page 12, beginning at line 18, through page 14, ending at line 4 with "efficient", please replace all present paragraphs with the following new paragraphs:

--It is envisioned that the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 can also be utilized for supporting a variety of objects, such as lumber, fence posts, and other similar, elongated construction materials, capable of being safely supported by the present invention. Thus, use of the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 is not intended to be limited solely for the support and transport of ladders.

It is further envisioned that alternatively, the all-terrain vehicle support bracket 10 may be permanently mounted via welding, bolting, or clamping to the front and rear ATV horizontal frame members 52, 60. Welding, however, would be the preferred method for permanent attachment for this modified form of the invention. As bolts require holes, this method of attachment would leave surfaces exposed thereby being more susceptible to rust.

To use the above-described embodiment, the user selects a desired extension member 30 and attaches it to the threaded cusp 23. The user then orthogonally directs retainment arms 41, 42 of the upper arm member 40 below inner cross member 56 and inner cross member 57 of front ATV horizontal frame member 52, such that the upper circumferential surface of retainment arms 41, 42 mechanically contacts and impinges against a lower circumferential surface of inner cross members 56, 57. The rear, external circumferential sidewall of main leg member 21 rests against the upper surface of vertical
{W0146815.1}

member 53 of the front ATV horizontal frame member 52. Finally, the user places the lateral sidewall 16a of the vertical leg 16 of the aluminum ladder 15 against the horizontally disposed impingement surface 33, and rests the forward sidewalls 16b of the vertical legs 16 of aluminum ladder 15 against the main leg member 21, thereby securably supporting the ladder 15 in a restrained manner for transport.

The use of the present invention allows a standard ATV 50 to be adapted to support an object in a manner which is quick, easy, and efficient.--